

AMENDMENT

In the Specification:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 38, line 14, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Site-directed mutagenesis was performed by PCR with primers containing appropriate target substitutions. All mutants were cloned between *Bam*HI and *Hind*III restriction sites of the pQE30 vector (Qiagen). Recombinant proteins were 6 × Histidine-tagged to contain the sequence 'MRHHHHHHGS' instead of the first Met. After overnight expression in *E. coli*, fluorescent proteins were purified using **TALON™** TALON Metal Affinity Resin (CLONTECH). SDS-PAGE analyses revealed that proteins were at least 95% pure.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 39, line 17, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Selected *E. coli* clones were grown at 37°C in 50 ml to an optical density of (OD) 0.6. At that point, the expression of recombinant FP was induced with 0.2 mM IPTG. The cultures were then incubated overnight. The following day, cells were harvested by centrifugation, resuspended in buffer (20 mM ~~Tris-HCl~~ **TRIS® HCL (hydroxymethyl) aminomethane hydroxychloride**, pH 8.0; 100 mM NaCl), and disrupted by sonication. Fluorescent proteins were purified from the soluble fraction using TALON™ Metal Affinity Resin (CLONTECH). Proteins were at least 95% pure according to SDS-PAGE.